

VZCZCXRO8845
PP RUEHDT RUEHPB
DE RUEHHM #0248/01 0781042
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 191042Z MAR 07
FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2234
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 2408
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 1596
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HO CHI MINH CITY 000248

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [PREF](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: FATHER LY INDICTED; DO NAM HAI QUIT

REF: A. HCMC 225; B) HCMC 204 AND PREVIOUS; C) HANOI 468

[1](#)B. AND PREVIOUS

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Hue-based dissident Father Phan Van Loi confirmed as authentic Internet reports that Hue authorities have indicted Father Nguyen Van Ly and four others for "propagandizing against the government." In HCMC, political activist Do Nam Hai told us he has ended his pro-democracy activism in the face of severe pressure on his family and the threat of his imminent prosecution. Hai's withdrawal from the pro-democracy movement, Father Ly's arrest and the detention of over 20 other key grassroots pro-democracy activists in HCMC and elsewhere means that, for all intents and purposes, the GVN has suppressed the grassroots dissident movement that briefly emerged in the south in 2006. End Summary.

Father Ly Formally Indicted

[1](#)2. (SBU) On March 19, we spoke by phone with Hue-based activist Father Phan Van Loi, who confirmed the authenticity of documents posted on overseas dissident websites purporting to be the police report and indictment papers against Father Nguyen Van Ly. Also indicted were Vietnam Progression Party (VPP) representatives Nguyen Phong, Nguyen Binh Thanh, Hoang Thi Anh Dao and Le Thi Le Hang. The five were indicted based on Article 88 of Vietnam's Criminal Code, which outlaws "activities to propagandize against the State."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Father Loi said that the documents assert that Father Ly coordinated and disseminated anti-government propaganda and "lured others into anti-government activities." The police report also noted that Father Ly paid associates a monthly allowance to carry out "political activities," such as posting materials on the Internet or purchasing cell phone SIM cards on his behalf. According to the Internet report, the police recommended that Ly receive a tough punishment because of his "provocative and uncooperative behavior" during the investigation.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Hue authorities recommended lenient treatment of the four VPP members because of their cooperation during the investigation. The police noted that Nguyen Phong, the VPP's senior-most representative, founded the VPP on Ly's instructions. The police report also notes that detained Hanoi-based lawyer Le Thi Cong Nhan also was a member of the VPP and recommends that Hanoi police reflect that fact in its investigation against her. Hue police identified Hong Trung as a hitherto unknown VPP member in the Central

Highlands province of Gia Lai and recommended police action against him as well.

Do Nam Hai Finally Breaks

¶15. (SBU) Separately on March 19, we also spoke with HCMC-based dissident Do Nam Hai (strictly protect), regarding Internet reports that he had ended his involvement in dissident activities. Hai told us that, over the past week, the police had "held his family hostage" to pressure him to renounce his activism. The situation came to a head on March 16, when he was again summoned to his district police station for interrogation. Three hours later, police brought his father, his older sister and his daughter to the station and announced that the authorities had a prosecution indictment ready against Hai. The police claimed that they had been holding back for "humanitarian reasons" and wanted to give Hai a "last chance" to avoid "killing" his 82-year-old mother who suffers from heart problems.

¶16. (SBU) Hai said that, following the police announcement, his family members started to cry and to beg him to follow police advice. Hai blasted the police tactic as "malicious" and "disgusting," but told us he was afraid that his mother would indeed die were he to be arrested, so he relented. At first, police asked him to write a letter committing to drop his political activism, which Hai agreed to do. However, later, the police demanded him to write a more expansive letter acknowledging that he was guilty of violating Vietnamese law and begging the GVN for mercy. After nearly 12 hours in police custody, Hai relented. Hai asked that the letter not be used to incriminate him, and asked for a written confirmation from the police. The police refused.

¶17. (SBU) According to Hai, he still has to go to working sessions with the police for the rest of this week to answer about the documents the police confiscated from his

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house in the past. Hai said he told the police to end its surveillance and leave him and his family alone; otherwise he would resume his political activities. Hai still welcomed interaction with USG officials. Hai also said he planned to become active in stock trading as a private investor and financial adviser.

¶18. (SBU) On March 16, the Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights for Viet Nam -- the dissident umbrella organization founded by Ly and Hai -- announced that Father Loi and HCMC-based Mennonite Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang would replace Nguyen Phong and Do Nam Hai.

¶19. (SBU) Comment: As reported reftel, Hai was the author of the pro-democracy 8406 bloc manifesto and the intellectual backbone of the new generation of political dissidents. His forced withdrawal from the pro-democracy movement that he helped found, along with the detention of Father Ly and at least 20 other new activists throughout the country (reftels) means that the GVN has effectively suppressed the grassroots pro-democracy movement that emerged in southern and central Vietnam in 2006. A number of aged dissidents such as Dr. Nguyen Dan Que and Tran Khue are "free," but under strict surveillance. Although they do not have the credibility of Do Nam Hai or Ly, it is very possible that Father Loi and Pastor Quang -- long-term irritants for the GVN in their own right -- also will be detained or face tougher pressure for their political activism.

¶10. (SBU) Comment continued: Despite police "goodwill," Do Nam Hai could still be indicted. In mid-February, VPP activist Nguyen Phong was detained briefly and forced to write a letter formally disbanding his party. Nonetheless, a month later he and his other VPP colleagues were indicted

along with Father Ly.
WINNICK